

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 07556 091903Z
ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

FODAG

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FAO, AORG
SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL ON FAO BUDGET

REF: (A) ROME 6741, (B) ROME 7019, (C) ROME 7555

1. AS INDICATED IN REFTEL, (C), MY MEETING WITH FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL EDOUARD SAOUMA WENT BADLY. CLEARLY SAOUMA HAD BEEN THINKING ABOUT MY FIRST APPROACH TO HIM TO INDICATE THE USG'S OPPOSITION TO HIS TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM (TCP).

2. AFTER INITIAL PLEASANTRIES AND WHEN I ASKED IF I COULD RESTATE OUR POSITION, DR. SAOUMA REACTED LIKE A SCHOOLBOY. HE EXPLAINED THERE WAS NO NEED TO KNOW OUR POSITION AS HE KNEW IT AND COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. THE ISSUE WAS FOR THE FAO MEMBER STATES AND THE COUNCIL.

3. WHEN I DEMONSTRATED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS A SERIOUS AND IMPORTANT PROBLEM WHICH WE WISHED TO DISCUSS WITH HIM WITH HOPES OF RESOLVING THE ISSUE, SAOUMA ACCUSED THE USG OF "IMPERIALISM" AND SUBJECTING HIM TO IMPROPER INFLUENCE SINCE HE GAVE OATH AS DIRECTOR GENERAL NOT TO BE INFLUENCED BY ANY ONE COUNTRY.

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4. I EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT I HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH THE HEADS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR MOST OF MY LIFE AND THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF IMPERIALISM OR THREATENING AND IMPROPER APPROACHES. FURTHERMORE, I WAS VERY DISTURBED AT HIS VISION OF HIS ROLE AS DIRECTOR GENERAL. MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE

ROLE OF A DIRECTOR GENERAL WAS TO KNOW THE POSITIONS OF THE STATES AND GROUPS OF STATES IN HIS ORGANIZATION SO THAT THE DIRECTOR GENERAL COULD MEDIATE AND RESOLVE PROBLEMS. THUS THERE WAS NOTHING IMPROPER OR IMPERIALISTIC ABOUT MY SEEKING TO EXPLAIN THE US POSITION TO HIM.

5. SAOUMA BACKED DOWN AND AGREED TO LISTEN AS I SLOWLY REVIEWED OUR POSITION PER PARA 4 REFTEL (C). SAOUMA SAT THERE LOOKING AWAY FROM ME AND UP AT CEILING. I STOPPED AND REPEATED AN IMPORTANT POINT WITH NO EFFECT. I HAD TO ASK HIM TWICE IF HE UNDERSTOOD SINCE IT WAS OBVIOUS HE HAD COMPLETELY ISOLATED HIMSELF. HE ADMITTED HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND AND WE HAD A REPEAT DISCUSSION OF PARAS 3 AND 4 ABOVE. ONLY NEW ASPECT WAS HE BOASTED OF HAVING A FULL REPORT ON WHAT EVERYBODY SAID AT THE GENEVA GROUP MEETING, REFTEL (B), AND A COPY OF THE QUESTIONS WE ASKED. ALSO, THE MANIPULATION OF HIS WORRY BEADS INCREASED CONSIDERABLY.

6. FINALLY I PERSUADED HIM TO LISTEN AND SUCCEEDED IN GETTING HIM TO CONSIDER THE US POSITION AND OUR SUGGESTIONS. AT THIS POINT AS REPORTED REFTEL (B), HE BRIGHTENED AND BEGAN TO ACT LIKE A DIRECTOR GENERAL AND THINK OF WAYS TO AVOID A PROBLEM.

7. I AM REPORTING SEPARATELY IN THIS MESSAGE THE ATMOSPHERICS OF THIS CONVERSATION BECAUSE I BELIEVE THEY ARE VERY SERIOUS FOR OUR FUTURE RELATIONS
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WITH SAOUMA. WE HAVE IN THE FAO A DIRECTOR GENERAL WHO IS INSECURE, JEALOUS, AND HOSTILE TO THE UNITED STATES. HE DOES NOT THINK IN THE SUBTLETIES NECESSARY TO ALLOW HIM TO SERVE READILY AS A MIDDLEMAN TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OURSELVES AND OTHER MEMBER STATES. HE IS ALSO VAIN AND THIS PARTIALLY EXPLAINS HIS REACTION TO OUR OPPOSITION TO HIS TCP. ANY POSITIONS WHICH CAN BE CONSTRUED AS AN ATTACK ON SAOUMA WILL, I PREDICT, GET THE SAME GLAZED REACTION THAT I RECEIVED. IN HIS DEFENSE, THE US POSITION OPPOSING THE TCP DOES ATTACK THE PRIMARY ACCOMPLISHMENT OF SAOUMA AS DIRECTOR GENERAL AND ONE OF WHICH HE IS PROUD. GARDNER

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